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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 08 USNATO 000457

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SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT AUGUST 22 2007

Classified By: CDA Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: D/SYG commented favorably on U.S. and UK counternarcotics strategies and noted the upcoming National Counternarcotics Conference in Kabul. The Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) reported that SHAPE will host a September conference on NATO training and equipment support for the ANA. The IMS provided its threat assessment and operational brief, as well as an analysis of the increase in fighting from 2006 to 2007. The IMS also reported that some progress had been made on Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) but that NATO is still woefully short of its targets.

-- Balkans: D/SYG informed Allies about the upcoming Troika and Contact Group meetings on Kosovo. The CMC stated that the operational tempo of KFOR remains high as it continues to train the Kosovo Police Service, and that the Balkans forest fires were under "reasonable control." Netherlands PermRep mentioned recent statements by Serbian PM demanding that Serbian troops/police be allowed back into Kosovo, and informed Allies about Serbian criticism that KFOR is not doing enough to protect religious sites. Portuguese Charge informed Allies of Portuguese Foreign Minister's visit to Pristina today.

-- Darfur: CMC noted on-going UN and AU discussions on the transition from AMIS to the Hybrid UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and informed the NAC that NATO and the UN will hold staff level talks on UNAMID in September.

-- Iraq: CMC informed Allies that NTMI activities are proceeding as planned, noting that an advance team from the Italian Carabinieri deploys to Iraq this week.

-- Statements on Political Subjects: The Spanish Charge, speaking for the OSCE CIO, discussed the recent Kazakhstan elections, saying the final election report will be issued in two months.

-- Georgia Missile Incident: Under AOB, the D/SYG noted that Georgia was discussed yesterday in the Political Committee and that there is a broad consensus on the facts of the August 6 missile incident, but there is no consensus on next steps. The Council discussed the incident and investigation at length, revealing a division between those who favor some public statement by NATO and those who prefer to let OSCE take the lead.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C) D/SYG Minuto-Rizzo, chairing, called the recently announced U.S. and UK counternarcotics strategies

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constructive, noting they contained numerous pragmatic proposals aimed to address the recognized linkage between the insurgency and narcotics trade in Afghanistan. He pointed to the strategies as excellent background in preparation for the NAC,s September 5 NAC meeting with UNODC Director Costa. The D/SYG also highlighted the August 28 National Counternarcotics Conference in Kabul, noting that the Afghan government is considering to hold a special session of the Policy Action Group during the conference, which President Karzai may attend to signal high-level backing.

13. (C) CMC Henault told the Council that SHAPE was continuing preparations for a September 18-19 briefing and conference for Allied and partner military reps on the status of NATO,s ANA training and equipping support, and future needs. CSTC-A officers from Kabul will participate, and will be the key providers of information on current ANA needs.

14. (C) New IMS AD for Operations, Italian BG Ligobbi, provided a threat assessment and operational update. He noted the "spillover" effect from ongoing operations in Farah in RC-West that was pushing more enemy fighters northward into Badghis province. He labeled Musa Qala district in RC-South,s Helmand province as a "safehaven" that permitted enemy resupply throughout RC-South, and noted that Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) remained intent to retake the Sangin-Kajaki corridor, currently secured by ISAF following intense operations over the summer. COMISAF,s main effort remained in RC-East, he stated, where ISAF,s theater task force was working with Afghan forces in a brigade-size operation in and around Tora Bora, Nangarhar. Looking at the number of significant activity reports (SIGACT), as a measure of the level of fighting throughout the country, Ligobbi concurred that the amount of SIGACTs in 2007 compared to similar periods in 2006 had significantly increased, but noted the level still remained below what ISAF had expected; remained low in the north, west, and capital; spiked periodically due to ISAF operations such as Medusa in fall 2006 and Achilles in spring 2007; and resulted largely from ISAF,s significantly expanded footprint and kinetic activities in the south and east throughout 2007.

15. (C) Turning to NATO Operational Mentor Liaison Teams (OMLTs, i.e. embedded trainers), BG Ligobbi noted the total

number of fielded OMLTs is now 24. The current shortfall remains at 25, however. 12 additional OMLTs have been offered, and are expected to be operational by March 2008. Even so, as the ANA continues to increase in size according to its development plan, NATO will find itself short 44 OMLTs by the end of 2008 should no additional teams be contributed by nations.

¶6. (C) The UK Charge asked whether it was time for ISAF to re-evaluate commonly held assumptions about OMF territorial ambitions, for example, the maxim that OMF sought to retake Kandahar, as OMF use of asymmetric tactics and corresponding information ops continued to increase in the face of ISAF

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military superiority. (BG LiGobbi granted some truth to Charge,s statement, but noted that should ISAF forces draw down, OMF would certainly re-up efforts to take and hold territory.) The Spanish Charge and Belgian Ambassador commended a recent international workshop on civilian casualties hosted by UNAMA, with the Belgian asking that SHAPE be more diligent in providing the NAC updated information on civilian casualties in its weekly reporting, as the NAC had agreed in late July. The D/SYG and CMC took the comment on board, and noted they would follow up.

Balkans

¶7. (C) The D/SYG informed Allies about the Troika invitation sent out to the parties negotiating over Kosovo regarding meetings in Vienna on 30 August. Following this, the Troika will meet with the Contact Group to discuss the outcome of the talks and a way forward. The D/SYG also noted that a Contact Group Foreign Minister,s meeting is scheduled for 27 September in New York on the margins of the UN General Assembly, where the SYG will be in attendance.

¶8. (C) The D/SYG then informed Council about the change of command ceremony scheduled to take place at KFOR headquarters on 31 August, when LTGEN Kather of Germany will be relieved by LTGEN Bout de Marnhac of France. The Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) stated that the operational tempo of KFOR remains high as discussions on a political settlement continue. He informed Allies that KFOR,s Multinational Task Force Monitoring Teams, particularly those in the central, southern, and western regions, continue to closely watch the situation on the ground. He also noted that KFOR continues to train the Kosovo Police Service. Lastly, he noted that forest fires in the Balkans were under "reasonable control" and that KFOR was providing support.

¶9. (C) The Netherlands PermRep mentioned recent statements by Serbian PM Kostunica demanding that Serbian troops and police be allowed back into Kosovo; he wondered whether this was an official position of the Serbian government or just the personal thoughts of Kostunica, and remarked that he was "astonished" to see this demand. He also informed Allies about Serbian criticism that KFOR is not doing enough to protect religious sites, and asked the D/SYG and Council how they would like to respond to these positions. The D/SYG said that he will put together a report covering these and other events that have taken place in August, to provide more organized information for next week,s NAC.

¶10. (C) The Portuguese Charge informed Allies about Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Filipe Marques Amado,s visit to Pristina today (22 August) to meet with UNMIK and other officials, and said that more information about the visit will be forthcoming.

Darfur

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¶11. (C) CMC noted that The UN and AU continue discussions on transition from AMIS to the Hybrid UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Agreement has been reached for the UNAMID Headquarters to be located in El Fasher, however a temporary HQ will be established in Khartoum. The main UNAMID logistical center will be in El Obeid (outside Darfur), and supplies will go over land 1,400 miles from Port Sudan.

¶12. (C) CMC said NATO International staff and International Military Staff will have staff level talks at the UN in New York 3-6 September to discuss likely NATO logistical support to UNAMID.

Iraq

¶13. (C) The CMC informed Allies that NTMI activities are proceeding as planned, particularly regarding the gendarmerie, and noted that an advance team from the Italian Carabinieri will deploy this week to Iraq. The main body of Carabinieri will deploy on 28 September and the first training of Iraqi National Police will begin on 14 October.

Statements on Political Subjects -----

¶14. (C) The Spanish Charge, speaking for the OSCE CIO, discussed the recent Kazakhstan elections, saying the final report will be issued in two months. The preliminary report shows the elections made progress but had problems. They were calm and well organized and the OSCE had good cooperation, but problems with election laws led to a weak and disunited opposition and their inability to pass the 7% threshold to win seats. There is room for the Kazakhstan government to improve its elections, and the fact that no opposition were elected showed weakness of institution.

Any Other Business -----

¶15. (U) D/SYG introduced Martin Howard as the new A/SYG for Operations.

¶16. (C) D/SYG noted that Georgia was discussed yesterday in the Political Committee and that there is a broad consensus on the facts of the August 6 missile incident, but there is no consensus on next steps. The OSCE representative Zuzul has been to Georgia and is now in Russia. OSCE is not planning its own investigation but will rely on the two expert reports plus the accounts from the Georgians and Russians. NATO's two goals should be to show support for Georgia and to decrease tensions.

¶17. (C) Lithuanian PermRep: NATO should take a position in support of Georgia's territorial integrity and need for an independent investigation. The expert reports show there were three violations of Georgian airspace and his government supports the idea (raised by U.S. at August 14 NAC) to link Georgia to the Air Situation Data Exchange (ASDE)

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¶18. (C) Estonian Deputy PermRep: Estonian experts participated (with Poland and UK) in the second experts group. Their findings agreed with the first group that Georgian airspace was violated three times on August 6, from the Russian side, that the missile was of Russian origin, and that Georgian planes are not capable of carrying the AS-11.

¶19. (C) German Deputy PermRep: His government favors a "neutral and independent inquiry". The OSCE is the best framework for this and Germany would nominate German experts for such an inquiry. But it is still an "open question" whether the OSCE will conduct an independent inquiry. There are still many unanswered questions, and more information from Russia is needed. Germany does not favor issuing a NATO statement now.

¶20. (C) Latvian Deputy PermRep: He supported the position of

Lithuania and Estonia, and proposed that the SYG send an envoy to the region. He also proposed raising the incident at the next NRC meeting in late Sept.

¶21. (C) Romanian Acting PermRep: Romania supports the acceleration of the ASDE project prior to SYG,s Tbilisi visit in October. She proposed having the NAC participate in the October visit.

¶22. (C) Belgian PermRep: His government still has questions about the nature of the incident, whether the fault lies locally or in Moscow. He also supported the German approach. "Let,s not confuse things; the OSCE is working on this, let,s wait for OSCE CIO to recommend next steps," he stated. He urged the NAC to express its concerns to Russia in diplomatic channels rather than publicly.

¶23. (C) U.S. Charge: The USG supports the two goals laid out by D/SYG - supporting Georgia,s territorial integrity and avoiding escalation. We support the OSCE role but believe it has not yet been fulfilled; Zuzul,s trip is political not investigative and the OSCE,s intentions are not yet clear. We should keep open the option of a NATO statement that would take note of the IGE reports, praise Georgian restraint, and support Georgia,s territorial integrity. Olson emphasized that the NAC should visit Georgia to offer support and convey its views to Georgians directly. He also noted that the ASDE project signals NATO,s attention to the issue, and said that completing this project can be a deliverable for the October trip.

¶24. (C) French Deputy PermRep: She supported the German and Belgian positions. She said that our (NATO,s) interest is "apaisement" (translated into English as "appeasement"), and not sure a NATO statement now would help, nor would a statement help in advance of the October SYG visit. France does not support raising this at the next NRC meeting. She asked SHAPE to explain why more progress has not been made on ASDE since it began in 2001.

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¶25. (C) Polish Deputy PermRep: He observed that the missile incident is a serious matter requiring thorough investigation. (Poland participated in the second experts group.) He supports accelerating the ASDE project, which might help to clarify and/or deter future such incidents, and he also supports a NATO statement, as well as the NAC participating in an October visit.

¶26. (C) Czech PermRep: He supports a "well balanced" NATO statement and supports the position of Lithuania and Estonia, but suggested statement could be issued by a spokesman (ie, not in the name of the SYG).

¶27. (C) Spanish PermRep: As OSCE CIO, Zuzul,s OSCE trip is not investigative, since that would require agreement from both Russia and Georgia. Spain supports the German/French position. He said that an investigation should involve all parties, and urged that all statements should address the reports and not make conclusions not made in the reports. He also stated that Russia and Georgia must both cooperate to clarify the facts of the incident. He does not support a NAC visit to region, as that would not be "favorable to NATO,s interests vis--vis Russia."

¶28. (C) Bulgarian PermRep: There is no sign that Russia will accept the experts, reports; Russia is still saying it is all a plot. So an OSCE report based on Russia input not likely to be productive. Noted that this is not the first violation of Georgian airspace and NATO should make clear to Russia it sees this as a serious incident. Supports a NATO statement or raising the issue in the NRC, as welQas accelerating ASDE, and a NAC visit.

¶29. (C) The Netherland PermRep: His government supports the

Belgian/French position on a NATO statement. He stated that whether or not clarification is forthcoming on why the missile was dropped, NATO should make clear to Russia that the repeated overflights are unacceptable. The Netherlands could possibly support a NAC visit, but not on the basis of support for Georgia in this incident.

¶30. (C) British Deputy PermRep: The next step should be getting clear information on the incident, and to do so, an OSCE investigation with Russian participation would be best, but it is not clear that Zuzul can achieve that. Should keep open the option of a NATO statement or NAC trip until it is clear if Russia will cooperate with OSCE or not, but does support accelerating ASDE, though the capabilities of the system mean it will not make a big difference in preventing or clarifying any future incidents.

¶31. (C) Turkish PermRep: His country supports the Belgian/French position: NATO should support the OSCE and avoid escalation. He supported the ASDE project and reported that Ankara is working on an MOU with Georgia and is looking to resolve a funding issue.

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¶32. (C) NOTE: The Turkish PermRep said that there were "financial aspects" of connecting Georgia to the air situation data exchange. Per SHAPE sources, Turkey is raising the issue of annual operating cost for the data links from Georgia to the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at Eskisehir (Turkey). SHAPE will pay for the initial connection from NATO (NSIP) funds. According to Turkish military authorities at NATO, they currently are discussing how to resolve this issue with the Turkish General Staff. If Turkey opts not to meet the annual operating costs, they could seek NATO common funding. Getting approval for those funds could be difficult because, strictly speaking, they do not meet a minimum military requirement, the baseline rationale for a military funding decision. In NATO terms, they would be considered a partner relationship cost. END NOTE.

¶33. (C) Italian PermRep: NATO should wait for the conclusion of Zuzul's OSCE mission. A NATO statement now would be premature, particularly since there is obviously not consensus in the NAC. He encouraged the NAC to "make clear" to Russia how serious NATO sees the incident. Italy supports the ASDE project.

¶34. (C) Lithuanian PermRep, again: To those opposing a NATO reaction, he argued that there is little point in waiting for OSCE to decide its role or for participation from Russia, since those would never be forthcoming, and meanwhile, time is passing. The silence from NATO does not help to calm the tensions in the region, he claimed.

¶35. (C) Greek Deputy PermRep: Supports the German/French position "given that the OSCE is currently looking into the matter."

¶36. (C) Portuguese Deputy PermRep: A NATO statement should follow a "wrap up" of the various reports, so we should wait to get the OSCE assessment and a clear Russia reaction. He suggested that by waiting NATO can issue a more "comprehensive statement."

¶37. (C) The D/SYG closed the discussion by drawing the following conclusions:
-- NATO supports the two goals of supporting Georgia's territorial integrity and seeking to reduce tensions, but there are differences in the NAC on how to achieve this.
-- It's not true to say NATO has done nothing. NATO is paying attention to the situation and DSYG and others have been in contact with Georgian officials.
-- NATO wants to take a "moderate and responsible" approach.

¶38. (C) The D/SYG suggested the following next steps:
-- Accelerate the ASDE project; SHAPE "says they, re ready to go".
-- Georgia has not asked for formal political consultations with NATO, but we could do that if they request.
-- Leave option open for a future statement, waiting for

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Zuzul to finish his mission.

-- The SYG,s trip to Tbilisi is Oct 2-3, which is fairly soon.

-- The idea of a NAC visit will be raised again.

OLSON